

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS WORK.

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We read of three dispensations in the Christian era, the dispensation of the Father, the dispensation of the Son and the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. The first dispensation was characterized by a fear of God, with little love. In the second dispensation, that of the Son, Jesus was not yet glorified in the hearts of men, because the Spirit, the Glorifier, had not taken up his abode in them. Shortly before Jesus was crucified He comforted His disciples with the promise of the Holy Ghost. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things. . ." John 14-26 We thank God for the privilege of living in the Holy Ghost dispensation, when He, the Holy Ghost, dwells in the hearts of believers and guides them into all truth. I wish to call your attention to some of the characteristics of this Divine Guide.

I. He is the Spirit of holiness. His name is the Holy Spirit. His one comprehensive attribute is holiness. If He works in men or through men, He must needs dwell in their hearts. The Apostle Paul exclaims, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" And he very positively declares, too, that the temple of God is holy. People generally think of a temple as a holy place. Some may ignorantly pollute it. This idea reaches its extreme limit in the case of the Jews. How sacred was their temple! Paul uses this figure, so impressive to the Jew, to set forth the absolute necessity for purity in the place where the Spirit of God is to dwell and do His work. How then can the Christian who does not strive for the utmost purity of heart and life ask God to make him instrumental in accomplishing the work of salvation?

II. The Holy Spirit is also the spirit of truth. Jesus said, "He will guide you into all truth," John 16:13. Working in harmony with the Spirit of God, enables one to come to a more correct knowledge of scientific truth. Theology without the inspiring indwelling of the Holy Spirit is an absurdity. But what we need to notice here is truth inwrought into the life—that which is essential in the bringing of the soul into right relationship to God. If there be anything in the inmost workings and ways of the heart which is not perfectly frank, clear and truthful before God, there can be no union with the Spirit of God.

III. Again the Holy Spirit is characterized as the working Spirit. Paul says, "but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit." The Holy Spirit is everywhere in the Scripture represented as energizing. In His mighty working His activity is incessant. Is it possible that the Christian should be of any use who finds nothing to do? I dare say no. I believe if we are a true child of God, He will at different times along our pathway give us definite things to do. And the failure to do those things means absolute disobedience to God's will. Those things may be some of the little things of life, but I believe the true Christian has work to do. Incessant earnest work is necessary to bring us into harmony with the ever-working Spirit. Think of the results when the apostles waited in Jerusalem until endued with power. Three thousand souls were added to the church in one day.

IV. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of supplication. "The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." A yearning and an outgoing of desire so intense that it cannot find expression in language. The Christian who is filled with the Spirit will have this same spirit of intercession. We cannot be in sympathy with the

Spirit of God, if we do not pray earnestly that the unsaved may yet find mercy. I fear too many times we lack in real intercessory prayer. When we think of those in our own communities and the millions of souls in heathen lands passing on to the judgment without Christ, it ought to put us on our faces before God.

V. The Holy Spirit is also said to be the spirit of harmony. We read in the Word, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." If we be one with the Spirit of God, how completely must all bitterness, jealousy, anger and strife be put away. If we cherish an unforgiving spirit, we must abandon all hope of doing anything in furtherance of the work of God, who so loves us in our sin, that His prayer for us is in intensity and earnestness. The forgiving love of Jesus is the love of the Spirit also.

VI. Next we might notice the Holy Spirit is the minister of enlightenment. He illumines the judgment and fashions our decisions. He unfolds visions of glory, and throws heavenly radiance upon the common road. The significance of the word revealed is to uncover, to make manifest things that are hid. This may be done in other ways than by throwing light upon them. We could disclose a buried world to a man by endowing him with a new sense. Let a deaf man go into the woods at break of day when the birds are waking and beginning to sing. That world of melody is then to him as though it did not exist. But if that man could be endowed with the sense of hearing, a new world would be revealed to him. The natural man is void of the requisite sense to appreciate things of God. But the Holy Spirit reveals them unto us by endowing us with the taste we need. He gives us a taste for His fellowship.

VII. The Holy Spirit also gives us a taste for the King's will. "Oh, how love I thy law," "I delight to do thy will," "Sweeter to me than honey comb." Our Lord Himself when on earth spoke of the strong, sweet nutriment he found in His holy obedience. He said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." The Holy Spirit quickens utterance; He unlooses the tongue. Our speech is "not the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Here is the secret of power in service. The Lord bade the disciples tarry. They were to be witnesses unto Him. This is the grandest result of being filled with the Holy Ghost. We are qualified to be His witnesses. The secret of power in winning souls is not intellect, learning, culture, human eloquence—it is simply and solely the Holy Spirit. All our preaching and teaching, even though it be the truth of God, is but as sounding brass or tinkling sycamore till God's Spirit puts a divine soul into the utterance. How weak we are without the Spirit.

A certain man, Mr. Wishard, asked an Armenian priest in Turkey the question, "Why has your Church lost the enthusiasm for souls that characterized it in the early centuries, when its members were active in telling men of Christ?" The priest replied, "We are not an educated people." Mr. Wishard said, "How much evidence have we that the early witnesses who were so successful were educated men?" The priest trying to shift his ground replied, "We have no railroad facilities such as you have in America, and so are handicapped in our work." Mr. Wishard persisted, saying, "What railroads did they have in the first century?" The priest finally admitted, "Ah, brother, those men had a relation with God and the Holy Spirit which we do not have."

Now the gift of the Holy Spirit demands a spirit of righteousness in us. There was Barnabas, of whom it was said, "He was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost." Peter became an army, "an army of the living God." If the Churches of today were filled with men of such glorious spiritual endowment, what would be the tale of exploits, what new chapters would be added to the Acts of the Apostles. We cannot compute the value and significance and the power of that unifying association. How we ought to pray for a Spirit-filled church.—The Wesleyan Methodist.

Beals, Maine.

Dear Bro. Trafton: Enclosed you will find money for the renewal of the Highway. Surely the Lord has been good to us the past year. We thank Him for all the many blessings of life. Trusting this will be a great year for the Highway, we are,

Yours in His service,
MR. AND MRS. A. H. URQUHART.

SOME THINGS WHICH WILL HURT YOUR SOUL

The ascendancy of the physical over the spiritual.

Too much frivolity.

Discouragement.

Low contentment in matters of what there is in certain errors.

Living in the neighborhood of questionable things.

Worry.

Trickery in business relations.

Exaggeration.

Reading that does not feed the soul.

Infrequent and short prayers.

Living at a high pitch emotionally.

Taking yourself too seriously.

Thoughtless conversation.

Thinking of your injuries too much.

Unkind criticism of others.

Secret moral irregularities.

Careless relations to the opposite sex.

Failure to build habits of piety.

Neglect of Bible reading.

Indolence, irritation and irreverence.

Exciting revelry in play or work.

Failure to witness for Christ.

Love of money.

Telling smutty stories.

Intemperance in your affections.

Familiarity with worldlings.

Loose imaginations.

Overcaution about what others think of you.—
Selected.

The question is often asked, "If tithing is so important, why did not Jesus say more about it?" Is the Sabbath important? Can you find in His teaching any stronger endorsement of the law of the Sabbath than of the law of the tithe? Can you find any as strong? Is the Church important? Christ never mentioned the Church—meaning the Church in our modern sense—but once, and then in a passage of very difficult and, as every scholar knows, of very doubtful interpretation. Christ's teaching in all the four Gospels is saturated with the "kingdom." The words "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" were ever upon His lips. Keeping the Sabbath, paying tithes, worshiping in church, observing the sacraments, all are important, but all are means to an end. The end is the building up of the kingdom of heaven, first in our own hearts and then helping to build it up in the hearts of others.